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Viewing cable 06BEIRUT2471, TFLE01: SAMIR JA'JA' SUPPORTS PROPOSED PATH TO

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06BEIRUT2471	2006-07-25 18:38	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Beirut

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 002471

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NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/SINGH/HARDING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/25/2016
TAGS: [IS](#) [LE](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SY](#)
SUBJECT: TFLE01: SAMIR JA'JA' SUPPORTS PROPOSED PATH TO

CEASE-FIRE...WITH A SUGGESTION

Classified By: Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman. Reason: Section 1.4 (b).

SUMMARY

11. (C) After the Ambassador reviewed current thinking regarding the components of a possible cease-fire, Lebanese Forces leader Samir Ja'ja' expressed his overall support of the approach, particularly the intent to implement all the components in a single phase. He also conveyed his belief that a hollow cease-fire, one which does not disarm Hizballah, would inevitably lead to a renewal of the conflict. Concerning the proposed Multi-national Stabilization Force (MNSF), Ja'ja' fully supported the idea and felt that even though PM Siniora would like to initiate a request to the international community, he could not due to a potential rupture of his Cabinet and underlying Sunni-Shia tensions. Ja'ja' stated that the key to dismantling Hizballah as a military force was in making it an "internal problem," that is, make it clear to the Lebanese people that Hizballah is the threat that caused so much destruction to their country. The resulting political pressure, along with a steady degradation of its capability by IDF, is the only path to its disarmament. He did insist that, as difficult as it would be for Israelis to accept, both Shebaa and Lebanese prisoners in Israel have to be addressed in some manner. End summary.

12. (C) Former Lebanese Forces militia leader and now key member of the pro-reform March 14 coalition, Samir Ja'ja', discussed the current situation with the Ambassador and poloff on July 25. Ja'ja' advisor Elie Khoury also attended the meeting. The Ambassador gave Ja'ja' a quick overview of the meeting SecState had with his March 14 colleagues yesterday (July 24), as well as current thinking regarding the conditions needed to attain a just, durable cease-fire.

STRONG ENDORSEMENT OF CURRENT APPROACH

13. (C) After listening to the ideas being discussed, Ja'ja' expressed full support of the proposed approach: prohibition of "armed presence" near the border, effective embargo of arms into Lebanon (except to the LAF), respect of the Blue Line, withdrawal of foreign (Iranian) elements from Lebanon, full implementation of 1559 and 1680, cessation of hostilities concurrent with the deployment of a robust MNSF, a comprehensive humanitarian and reconstruction program, and finally, an Israeli "commitment" to address territorial issues.

14. (C) Ja'ja' agreed with the Ambassador that the immediate deployment of the MNSF was critical on many levels: it would stabilize the south, permit the return of those who fled the fighting, train and modernize the LAF, and provide extensive engineering capabilities for the large reconstruction program that will be needed.

15. (C) The Lebanese Forces leader echoed many of his colleagues in yesterday's meeting when he stated that effective stabilization was important not only to the Israelis, but would take away a great deal of social pressure that has resulted from IDP movements now causing confessional friction.

16. (C) He was less sanguine about the U.S. hope that PM Siniora would initiate the MNSF request to the international community. Ja'ja' was certain that Siniora would like to put a Lebanese imprint on the MNSF proposal -- to allay fears of a security force imposed from outside Lebanon -- but political realities and the ever-present fear of Sunni-Shia conflict prevented him. Ja'ja' said he wished it were otherwise, but the international community would have to make the offer, and only then could the Government could accept.

A SUGGESTION TO FILL IN THE GAPS

¶17. (C) Concerning the presentation of the proposed conditions for a cease-fire to the Lebanese people, Ja'ja' said it was very important not only to place the blame for Lebanon's current suffering on Hizballah, but to structure the "package" so that it addresses some long festering issues, specifically Shebaa and the prisoners in Israeli jails. He said his suggestion was "to fill in the gaps" of the current proposal. The Ambassador commented that the

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prisoner exchange issue was a non-starter, as the Israelis have noted that it rewards kidnapping and provides incentives for additional kidnappings.

¶18. (C) Although Ja'ja' said he understood Israeli reluctance to link Shebaa and prisoners to any cease-fire, he said to do otherwise would result in a proposal that was weighted too heavily in Israel's favor. He implied it was not necessary for Israel to immediately resolve both issues, but they must be "explicitly" referred to in any cease-fire document. In his view, an Israeli commitment to address both issues would have the effect of denying a powerful argument from Hizballah. Without these issues to shield itself, Hizballah would become an "internal problem," and an uncontrollable group that through unjustified action had endangered the Lebanese state and its people. He acknowledged that Hizballah would attempt to move the goal posts if Shebaa was addressed, but Ja'ja' was certain that for the Lebanese people, it was Shebaa that held importance. If Hizballah tried to drag in other claims, they would be left standing all alone in Lebanon.

¶19. (C) Ja'ja' continued his argument that because the cease-fire had to accomplish the dismantling of Hizballah's military capability, it was imperative that it address all the issues that gave rise to Hizballah's power. Without both popular demand to disarm and a serious weakening of its military capability (by the IDF), disarmament would be extremely difficult to achieve.

USE TA'IF AGREEMENT TO ATTAIN 1559

¶10. (C) Repeating a common refrain in Lebanese political discourse, Ja'ja' stated that although UNSCR 1559 was a powerful tool and had to be fully implemented, it was now closely associated with outside interests, including those of Israel. Ja'ja' expressed his firm belief that the Ta'if Agreement, as well as the preceding Armistice Agreement, could be effectively used to achieve full implementation of both 1559 and 1680. These two agreements were favorably viewed in Lebanon, and in the Arab world, as documents which represented Arab interests and aspirations. He urged the international community to use them as leverage in achieving otherwise very difficult goals: disarmament, extension of national sovereignty, secure borders, and representative government.

¶11. (C) A secondary advantage to using the language and credibility of Ta'if and the Armistice in implementing 1559 and 1680 is that they would assuage the fears of the Shia community -- a community that will lose its most powerful protector if Hizballah is defanged. Both documents specifically assure all confessions in Lebanon equitable access to power and resources, something that is not addressed in the UNSC resolutions.

CABINET IS PROVING RESILIENT

¶12. (C) Ja'ja' remarked that PM Siniora is doing quite well in a very tough situation. With regards to the previously held conventional wisdom that the Cabinet would fall if a serious crisis occurred, Ja'ja' said that Hizballah and the other Shia ministers are now fearful of leaving the

government, because they realize the Cabinet would simply continue to function and start to reach important decisions without them.

¶13. (C) Concerning other political figures, he said that Nabih Berri is needed, but unlike many other observers, he believes Berri's power will diminish once Hizballah's power fades. He believes Berri's power is inextricably linked with Hizballah, and as such, his motivations will not always be for the good of Lebanon. But as the primary conduit to the now-reclusive Hassan Nasrallah, he has to be courted.

¶14. (C) With regard to the previously ascendant Michel Aoun, Ja'ja' just shook his head and indicated the Free Patriotic Movement leader is now lost. "He thought it was just going to be a few days of skirmishes," remarked Ja'ja', "and now he is completely perplexed."
FELTMAN